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Dear Friend,

Recent years have been devastating in the Middle East. We in Israel have witnessed firsthand a parallel destabilizing of the region and abandonment of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Pragmatists were weakened. The terrain became far too convenient for Jihadist recruitment. The civil war in Iraq, the deterioration in Gaza since Hamas took control, and the increasing Iranian threats are omnipresent testaments of how bad things have become.

This harsh reality has made clearer than ever the congruence of Israeli and American interests in finally delivering a comprehensive regional peace in the Middle East. The path isn't easy, but delays will only make it harder.

Americans for Peace Now is your guide to pushing for a different Middle East.

The US administration convened an invaluable meeting in Annapolis in November to further Israeli-Palestinian peace, and President Bush followed up with a trip to Jerusalem and Ramallah in January. [It's about time that the Bush Administration applied diplomacy to the problems of the Middle East.](#)

Yet one or two diplomatic meetings are not sufficient. They must be matched by a commitment to connect the regional dots in ways that maximize the prospects of a sustainable peace and help re-stabilize the region. Now is the time to clarify the parameters of a two-state solution and deliver on its implementation — not to just repeat the mantra of “Israel and Palestine living side-by-side.” Time is of the essence. Absent a political process that offers our neighbors genuine hope for a better future, Palestinian support for a two-state solution will continue to fall.

It is time for a ceasefire with Hamas in order to bring an end to the shelling of the Israeli town of Sderot and, at the same time, to give Hamas every incentive not to blow up the process. Similarly, isolating Syria encourages it to play a “spoiler” role.

We hear as much from the leaders of Israel's intelligence community. We know that top Israeli strategists routinely convey such messages to their American counterparts, at least when it comes to Syria. [Israel's outgoing Deputy Chief of Staff, Major General Moshe Kaplinsky, while still in uniform, publicly](#)

[advocated negotiations with Syria to a large crowd of Middle East policy makers, analysts and journalists near Washington in October.](#) Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in her visit to Jerusalem in early October, repeatedly spoke about the need for comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace. We all know that there is no comprehensive peace without Syria.

There is a role for moderate Arab states as well. They must support Palestinian and Israeli leaders, helping them make the courageous decisions needed to bring about a meaningful change of course. Arab states would do well to remind the parties that, in the spirit of the Arab League Peace Initiative, they stand ready to go a long way to normalizing relations with Israel once it resolves its conflict with the Palestinians. A full-court diplomatic press could improve the prospects for a better atmosphere in Iraq and change the equation regarding a military conflict with Iran.

Connecting all these dots would make for a more secure Israel, a more secure America, and a more secure Middle East. At long last, recognition that a two-state solution is in the interest of both Israel and the U.S. has penetrated the Israeli mainstream and the White House. Secretary Rice and her Undersecretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns publicly acknowledged in October, for the first time, [that establishing a Palestinian state was a key national security interest of the United States.](#)

We in Israel, who for years argued that a Palestinian state was needed to safeguard Israel, also share America's interests when it comes to the value of a Palestinian state. A negotiated Palestinian state could strengthen regional moderates and weaken the growing influence of the Iranian-led extremism that is haunting our region. As the American bi-partisan Iraq Study Group pointed out in December 2006, progress towards Israeli-Arab peace makes a difference when it comes to stabilizing Iraq and the effort to resurrect America's credibility in the region. These are not only American interests but vital Israeli interests as well. They represent dots on the Mideast map that we have been urging our leaders and yours to jointly address.

Americans for Peace Now (APN) — the sister organization of *Shalom Achshav*, the Israeli Peace Now movement — judiciously and courageously connects those dots. When many others were browbeaten, frustrated, or intimidated into putting down the pen, APN was still there busily charting an horizon of hope, dot-to-dot. Today APN leads the effort to take a sane, progressive, pro-peace message to elected officials, the media and the broader public.

[APN is the preeminent organization among Jewish groups in prodding U.S. decision makers and the Jewish community to support the peace process.](#) Its newsletters, opinion pieces, and website are simply the best resources for the pro-Israel, pro-peace community. APN dispatches speakers to synagogues and

campuses across the country. Respected on Capitol Hill, APN regularly puts the top Israeli, Arab, and American experts in touch with influential policy makers. It helps drive the debate.

For us in Israel, APN is the antidote to the dreadful tendency in America to confuse pro-Israel with pro-rejectionism, pro-settlements and even pro-war. APN helps re-establish the too often lost connection between pursuit of peace and pursuit of shared US, Israeli and Arab interests. APN's message embodies the real Israeli need to end the occupation, realize agreed borders with our neighbors and be accepted in the region. That is why, as leaders of Israel's peace movement, we turn to you to request that you give your support to APN.

[APN is your voice: responsible, rational, pro-Israel, pro-peace.](#)

Contributions to APN are used effectively. Charity Navigator, America's top independent charity evaluator, recently ranked APN at the top of the class for sound fiscal management with a 4-star rating for the second year in a row. Only 12% of charities rated by Charity Navigator have received two consecutive 4-star ratings.

APN is also a lifeline for the peace movement in Israel. Sixty to 90 percent of the funds that *Shalom Achshav* uses for its activities are provided by APN. This allows *Shalom Achshav* to inform and mobilize the Israeli public in support of the negotiated two-state solution.

If we are to arrive at a two-state solution, we must put an end to Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank. Every additional settlement makes the establishment of a viable Palestinian state more difficult. And there is no greater challenge to settlement expansion than the vigilance of *Shalom Achshav's* Settlement Watch project. Settlement Watch tracks construction in settlements and the establishment of new settlements, providing vital information to the media, diplomats, Israeli officials, and the general public. Settlement Watch data also allows Peace Now's attorneys to successfully challenge settlement construction in Israel's courts.

[We've said it already. This is a crucial time for peace.](#) Allow us to add two reasons why your support is needed now, issues on which we trust APN to take the right stand, make the right moves, and demonstrate leadership:

- We live in Israel, but we are aware that America is entering a crucial Presidential election season. The argument needs to be taken to the political and public arena that [resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an absolute priority for the next administration](#). APN will make this case — tirelessly and unapologetically.

- APN consistently advocates an approach to the region that is in line with moving beyond the self-defeating hysteria of recent years. The slide towards a deteriorating security situation in the Middle East and rising radicalism has not yet been stopped. Restarting peace efforts is part of stopping that slide. As is a reframing of how one looks at the region. Talking to one's adversaries, broad diplomatic engagement, and the avoidance of precipitous, military intervention are all vitally needed.

For us, pro-Israel is not being proponents of the settler movement, not accepting populist Islamophobia, nor the McCarthyite muzzling of dissenting voices. Being pro-Israel is being pro-peace. It is being APN.

Please give generously.

Yours,

Yossi Beilin

Galia Golan

Dr. Yossi Beilin's lengthy career of public service makes him one of the most experienced politicians in Israel. First elected to the Knesset in 1988, Dr. Beilin has served as Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister, Deputy Finance Minister, Minister of Economy and Planning, and Minister of Justice. Today he serves as a Member of Knesset and chairman of Israel's Meretz Party.

Dr. Beilin is a leading proponent of the peace process with Israel's neighbors and especially the Palestinians, identifying Israel's national interest as being best served by achieving a fair, just, and comprehensive peace in the region. Dr. Beilin headed Israeli delegations to peace talks in the 1990's and was a negotiator at the Taba talks with the Palestinians in January 2001. Dr. Beilin also led a group of Israeli politicians, security experts, and intellectuals who held informal talks with their Palestinian counterparts to reach a detailed permanent status agreement. This effort culminated in the Geneva Initiative.

Over the years, Dr. Beilin has established himself as one of Israel's foremost thinkers on the issue of Jewish continuity and relations between Israel and Diaspora Jewry. He was an innovator of the "Birthright" program, which in its first year brought almost 6,000 young Jews to Israel.

Galia Golan — A long-time leader of Shalom Achshav, Dr. Golan is Professor at the School of Government, Policy and Diplomacy of the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya, Israel. Dr. Golan came to the IDC following a long career at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where she served as chair of the Department of Political Science and chair of the Lafer Center for Women's Studies. In 2007 she was awarded the Israeli Political Science Association's Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Dr. Golan is also a founding Board member of Bat Shalom, the Israeli component of the Jerusalem Link — a Palestinian-Israeli women's joint venture for peace, and a founding Board member of the Israel Women's Network. She was the recipient of the 1995 New Israel Fund Alice Shalvi Award for Women in Leadership and was awarded the Gleitsman Foundation Activist Prize in 1999. She is a member of the International Women's Commission for a Just Peace in the Middle East, and an elected member of the Pugwash Council.

Dr. Golan is the author of nine books and innumerable articles. She has been a visiting scholar at the University of California, Cornell, Wellesley College, and the Royal Institute for International Affairs in London. She is an international fellow of the Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life of Brandeis University and has been a MacArthur Foundation and a Ford Foundation Fellow.

Contact Americans for Peace Now (APN) at 1101 14th Street NW, 6th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005 for financial information and a full description of its programs.